

Implementing Recovery Plans



Now that plans are complete or nearly so, regional organizations and others desire to move forward to do what we said we would do in these plans. There is agreement that regional organizations together with lead entities and other interested parties are in position to tackle this enormous undertaking: they bring the right people to the table in a forum that allows healthy discussion about local issues; they have a common goal that they have created; and they know their plan and its relation to other efforts going on in their areas. They know that recovery actions hit the ground at the local watershed scale, but it is ultimately at the ESU or regional scale at which recovery must be measured and coordinated. And, they know that this is new territory, but we need to act in the face of uncertainty and learn from our mistakes and successes as we proceed.

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Relationship of Regional Structures to Lead Entities, Planning Units, and Others Engaged in Salmon Recovery Within the Region

The regional groups have stepped forward and said they are committed and ready to continue the work they began years ago. They held meetings with lead entities in their recovery area and discussed roles, responsibilities, and relationships. Generally, lead entities will continue in their legislatively directed roles relative to habitat project development. Actions are underway in the Yakima to bring the lead entity and regional organization together into one body; this will result in four of six regions where the lead entity and regional organization are the same: Hood Canal, Lower Columbia, Yakima, and Snake. In Puget Sound and the Upper Columbia Regions there is acknowledgement that recovery plans will guide project recommendations from lead entities.

Structure to Implement Plans

In general, all regions are proposing a model that uses the policy structure that created the recovery plan, a small technical arm to provide continuing advice on scientific matters, and a minimal staff to complete the plan adoption process with NMFS; coordinate implementation of recovery plan actions with implementing partners to ensure their partners' programs reflect the actions and science embodied in recovery plans; track and report progress; implement, convene, coordinate, and/or facilitate key regional programmatic actions; coordinate development and implementation of funding strategies to support plan implementation; and provide a focal point for information sharing and public outreach. Some regions may contract with local governments, conservation districts, PUDs, and others to assist with these functions. In Puget Sound, the Governor has asked a panel to develop a broad initiative on the overall health of the Sound and recommend how to incorporate and support salmon recovery.

Funding Recovery Plans

Funding implementation of all actions in these recovery plans will take more than the state and federal dollars available to the SRFB. Even with all existing sources tapped, it's likely we will be short of the funding needs that have been identified. These regional organizations are committed to seeking new sources, leveraging existing sources to improve synergy, and better aligning actions to ensure we are doing the most important projects in the highest priority places and in the right sequence.

Funding for regional organization structures to accomplish these tasks is an important consideration for the future. The GSRO will work with the Office of Financial Management, Council of Regions, Lead Entity Advisory Group, and the SRFB to develop a recommended funding strategy supported by those involved in salmon recovery. We intend that process to yield recommendations that will be presented to the Governor, legislature, and the SRFB for deliberation and action in 2007.

Implementing Recovery Plans | Monitoring

Monitoring Salmon Recovery

Monitoring is the fulcrum for success in salmon recovery. Information from monitoring will tell us how well salmon are doing, and help us understand whether our actions are having the desired effect, so that adjustments can be made if needed.

NMFS has produced a decision framework that outlines what kinds of things lead to listings under the ESA, and what recovery efforts will need to achieve for de-listing. That framework is consistent with the state Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy and helps organize our approaches to monitoring recovery. Given the diverse situations across Washington, each recovery plan must establish an implementation structure and process that will bring together monitoring information to track and report progress toward recovery goals, objectives, and key milestones, and to make adjustments in

direction where needed based on new information. This is called adaptive management. The implementation structure must ensure that the appropriate decisions can be made and that monitoring addresses the most important questions in an efficient manner.

Finally, data associated with recovery monitoring need to be accessible and shared both within and outside each regional planning area to meet the needs of local and statewide reporting.

The Governor's Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health (Forum) emphasized these monitoring needs in guidance to salmon recovery regions in December 2005. These recommendations are also consistent with the state's 2002 Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy and federal monitoring guidance.

Monitoring Needs to Address Key Questions Associated with Each Recovery Plan

We must monitor:

- ▶ Viability of fish populations in each ESU — adults and juveniles, productivity, distribution, and diversity — asking, "Are fish numbers increasing?"
- ▶ Reduction in major threats and limiting factors — habitat, harvest, hatcheries, hydropower — asking, "Is habitat improving?"
- ▶ Our recovery actions, asking, "Did we do what we said we would do?" "Are recovery actions effective in meeting their local objectives?"

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Regional Monitoring

Each of Washington's regional salmon recovery plans contains adaptive management and monitoring components. Each region is improving and refining these components to address local needs and state and federal monitoring guidance.

Aspects that all regional recovery plans currently emphasize include:

- ▶ Adaptive management processes
- ▶ Monitoring trends in fish and their viability
- ▶ Habitat status and trends monitoring
- ▶ Implementation monitoring and reporting

The Forum has helped coordinate and resolve technical and policy issues in support of salmon recovery monitoring and reporting at the regional and statewide scales and produced its first biennial report of activities in January 2006.

The Forum, with its state, tribal, federal, local, and regional recovery partners, brings needed expertise and resources to salmon recovery monitoring. For example:

- ▶ The Salmon Recovery Funding Board monitors the effectiveness of categories of habitat projects, determines cause-effect relationships of actions to fish responses in a few intensively monitored watersheds, and funds development of habitat and water quality status and trends information
- ▶ The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and tribal co-managers monitor numbers and other trends of fish
- ▶ The Department of Ecology monitors water quality and quantity
- ▶ The Department of Natural Resources and US Forest Service monitor forested lands
- ▶ The Salmon and Watersheds Information Management Technical Advisory Committee helps coordinate data management issues for the Forum

- ▶ The initial phase of the Natural Resources Information Portal provides an approach for statewide access to state agency data

The Forum is also coordinating an effort by state agencies and OFM to develop recommendations to the Governor and legislature for improving or eliminating monitoring activities related to salmon recovery and watershed health.

A progress report is due in March 2006, with a final report due by September 2006.



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